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Bilious Remittent Fever in Kentucky 1818

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An

Essay upon the Bilious remittent fever as it occurred in a section of the state of Kentucky in the summer of the year 1818

Submitted

To the examination of the faculty of medicine in the University of Pensylvania for the purpose of procuring the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

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Preface.

In submitting, the observations to which the author, has prefixed these prefatory remarks, to the examination of the faculty of medicine he would do himself and the opinions which he has advanced great injustice, were he to omit mentioning, that the short time (which he has had of throwing them together which, from his ignorance of the circumstance of his going to visit this school until but a few days previous to his departure, from home, and from the

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complete occupation of his time during the winter in paying the necessary attention to the different courses of lectures has been mostly accomplished in the short time allowed since the close of the session; which have necessarily prevented his giving the subject that complete and attentive investigation which he had most anxiously desired to have instituted.

It is also with pain that the author feels the necessity of asking an indulgence, for the many blemishes both in the composition, and writing, which have been very much the result of the haste, to which he has been forced to submit, in order to accomplish this remarks previous to the expiration of the time prescribed by the regulations of the University.

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In the rage for speculation in
which physicians have indulged since the
first dawn of medical science to its pres
ent improved, and enlightened condition,
without noticing the innumerable and m-
-ay I say? absurd opinions of the scribbling
innovators of science, who have written under
the deceptive influence of their own supposed
superior mental powers and acuteness of
intellect under the fascinating influence of which
they have flattered themselves with the vain h-
ope of snatching from the dark labyrinth of dis-

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ease, the Esculapian wreathe encircled with which, they have expected speedily to scale the stupendous hights of the temple of Fame where by the immense profundity of their supposed sagacity, they should extend the imperishable luminaries, and indestructible monuments, of science.

I repeat paping by these (may I use the expression) moonstruck adorers of a self sufficient fancy, we cannot do otherwise, than observe the successive differences, imolations, and modifications, which have taken place, been recorded, and propagated, through the medium of the works of men, highly celebrated, and eminently illustrious, as the cultivators of medical science.

In this manner theories, have risen upon theories, producing revolution, upon revolution ~~upon revolution~~, each new hypothesis, erecting itself upon the ruins of its predecessor, a

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short lived being itself to be overthrown by one of a succeeding age, so that even the most long lived hypothesis has scarce outlived its progenitor, until his memory had been dispatched, in the death of friends and acquaintances.

Nor among the various phenomena which have been the subjects of speculation has that succession of phenomena to which we apply the term fever been prohibited a place eminently conspicuous.

Yet, notwithstanding the numerous discussions which have taken place upon this subject its precise nature it must be confessed, is a point far from being settled.

The early and premature acquirement of physiological, and pathological notions which have not been sufficiently scrutinized, before their adoption, often prove a source of fallacy, in all the

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deductions, which we are led to make from the various phenomena which afterwards present.

It is in this manner that we too often form theories which are only plausible on account of the ingenuity of their authors, who observing their deficiency are led to call to their aid that kind of sophisticated reasoning, by which an author has observed, the scripture itself though evidently compounded, for the purposes of morality, may by partial quotations be rendered a cloak for even the most heinous, and unpardonable crimes, which have proved the opprobrium of mankind.

But whilst making these remarks I would not be considered as declaiming against theory, For at the same time that we cannot consider that kind of speculation which is the offspring

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of ingenious minds, under the influence of sophistry, forming hypotheses from the detached idiosyncrasies of disease, without attending to the more universal, and important, phenomena which present, but only relating such circumstances as are calculated to support the preconceived child of a depraved fancy, whilst they leave to crouch in oblivion the most prominent phenomena which would militate against their own theories in any other light than the bane of science, yet it is a fact too self evident to admit of a momentary doubt, that it is by reasoning alone when founded upon the immoveable basis of previous observation, and experiment, that we are to arrive at truth in any branch of philosophy or science.

To ascribe all the false notions, and idle theories, which have appeared in the

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existence, annals of medicine, to the vol
untary suppression of such facts, as are
calculated to exercise an influence in con
tiposition to their opinions, would be to ac
cuse the medical world of an insincerity
which philanthropy, and our observation,
would concur in declaring inexcusa
ble.

"But may we not without being accu
-sed of illiberality, suppose that when men
have set out, to observe, and experiment,
under the influence, of particular im
pressions, that they have more generally
confined their researches, to such circum
stances, as are rather calculated to corob
-orate, than invalidate, such impressions.

"Thus, we may suppose a much larger
majority, of speculatists have been led from
truth, by the inaccuracy, and insufficien
cy of their observation, than a

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So in this manner that we too often observe speculatists bringing forward abstract circumstances to support general theories, instead of theories to account for general phenomena.

Having premised those few and general observations, in which I have rather endeavoured cursorily to ~~express~~ some of the more prominent faults of theorists than analytically to investigate them I shall without farther comment proceed to the subject of the essay, in which, it shall be my chief pleasure, to avoid such errors, and relate fact, in the full extent of its stubbornness, and impartiality.

It appears to me that in giving the history of a disease the ravages of which

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have been so severely felt by many of the inhabitants of the state of Kentucky that the most correct method of ascertaining, and ensuring, a correct view ~~view~~ of its nature and pathology will be to premise its history with a short account of such circumstances, previous, and concomitant, as might be supposed to exercise an influence or hold a necessary connexion, with the succeeding circumstances of disease.

The first and most conspicuous, of which we may consider as presenting itself in the weather, which during the spring and summer of the year 1818. has been such as has been but rarely experienced, by the oldest inhabitants of the state.

In the months of April and May which, with the exception of a few casual

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and dispersed cases of cynanche trachealis, among the children were characterized by an unusual degree of health, a degree of cold was observed, which was much deprecated by the farmer as it proved incompatible with the early germination, of the already sown seeds, and an impediment to the prosecution of the various operations of husbandry.

But the short duration of the preceding circumstances, were more than preponderate by the reverse occurrence, of an increase of temperature, hitherto almost equally unknown, which commenced about the first of June and continued until the the last of August, during which time our summer as it were enraged at the loss of her predecessor spring assumed not only its additional increase of temperature, but by its concomitant rains produced

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those almost innumerable floods, which by inundating the banks of our rivers, and smaller streams, with their adjacent low grounds, thus forming ponds of water which became stagnant, and at the same time washing off quantities of mud and vegetable matter from the high lands which was deposited in the form of a slimy sediment in which the inundated lands were perfectly and literally enveloped.

The succession of an immoderate increase of temperature to which these reiterated accumulations were exposed will, I think, excuse that stretch of the imagination, which materializes circumstances so much, as to suppose that during the decomposition, of this matter that there was emitted such quantities of poisonous miasmata, for the deleterious

agency of which the constitution had been already prepared, as is evidenced by the debility and peculiar susceptibility of the system for disease which ever follows the long application of an unaccustomed increase of temperature, as might have proved a necessary precedent to the disease.

Having thus concisely premised such circumstances, as I have thought calculated to have a particular bearing, or connexion, with the occurrence of this fever, I shall now endeavor to delineate such a picture, of those cases which occurred within my own immediate observation, as will serve to give a general idea of the most general and conspicuous, phenomena which were exhibited.

Let us suppose a fever the general prevalence, of which is insufficient to confer upon it the title of a powerful epidemic yet from the frequency of its

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occurence, and the malignancy which characterizes its presence is more than sufficient to clap it with the occuency and casual cause of solstitial remittents and we shall have found the proper medium as respects its general prevalence.

The month of June as I have already observed was ushered in with a great change of temperature and weather, at this time and not till this could it be said that Ceres had snatched the scep-tre from the hands of Eolus.

"But alas, how true is it that pleasure, and pain the progeny of the same parent, and that both streams are supplied by the same fountain. Just had the joyfull husbandmen cherishing the most pleasing anticipations of a plentiful remuneration for his commencing

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labors set forth, to the joyful task of the field, when disease like the fell monster, raises his Hydra head and the just happy being of prosperity writhes in the immolating grasp of its direful oppressor.

It was thus early in the month of June that the first cases marked by a particular degree of violence arrested my attention.

I might here proceed to a general history of the disease. But as I conceive that kind of illustration, which we receive from the relation of a particular case, is more particularly calculated to enforce a comprehensive view of the appearances of the disease, I shall here take the liberty of inserting one the history of which may be considered as a history of the

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in its more general and aggravated form, and as it was one in which my affections were particularly interested, it was one in which I had the most perfect though painful opportunity of investigating.

The propriety of this method of describing diseases, will be rendered more particularly evident, when we consider that we have rarely had an opportunity of viewing diseases in that form in which they are uninfluenced by medicines which have been exhibited for their removal.

A knowledge of this, with the great and I may say, in fact the insuperable difficulties under which we labour of discriminating between the symptoms consequent to the administration of medicines, which we have prescribed, which

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most generally change or modify, many of the phenomena, and what would have been the consequences had the disease been permitted to observe its natural inclination on entirely uninfluenced by the interference of our art,

Hence may we not suppose that many diseases had they been left to the uninterrupted powers of nature, would have either existed in a form very much different from that in which they have appeared or even not have existed at all,

Supposing the above observations to be sufficiently explicit of the reasons which have induced me to pursue the plan here laid down, I shall proceed concisely and as explicitly as the limits of this hasty sketch will admit to describe the progress and treatment of the disease,

For several days previous to the more violent attack, I had observed in the patient an absence of his usual vivacity and a sedentary habit appeared to be supervening in one who had been accustomed to the most active employments, when a loss of appetite a white and furred tongue informed me of an inordinate accumulation of morbid matter in the primæ viæ and which induced me to prescribe Calomel thirty grains, which having operated though not copiously, he felt relieved; at least so much so much so that on the following day having business several miles abroad he did not hesitate to ride out, at evening when he returned he felt a slight chill which induced him to go to bed where it was immediately succeeded

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by a violent paroxysm of fever which was attended with a considerable degree of delirium which latter symptoms had left him when I saw him on the succeeding morning though his fever still continued to rage with a considerable degree of violence, his pulse frequent though comparatively soft, great heat of body, restlessness and an insatiable thirst with a yellow scurf covering his tongue, I now prescribed of calomel and Pulv Jalapae each thirty grs, which was followed by so sparing an evacuation of his bowels that (at his request) I followed it by the Blue Lick water, which is a purging mineral water of great repute as cathartic among the citizens of this part of the state, this was given untill it produced copious discharges of an aqueous consistence and yellow colour. One o'clock P.M. a slight

remission, his extremities pale whilst his head
heart and neck are immoderately warm
have his feet and hands rubbed with
warm flannel sinapisms to his feet,
his paroxysms returns with some delirium
though his extremities continue pale
great pain in his back and loins, par
tial sweats break out on his forehead
neck and heart though they extend
no lower than his heart, delirium increas
es and continues greater part of the
night, Second day gave him an emet
ic of Tartras, antim. grs ~~two~~ Pulv. Specac.
grs thirty. this is followed by a good deal
of vomiting though little else than
water is thrown up, A colliquative diar
hea succeeds, with aggravation of the
pain in the back and loins. Considering
these circumstances as symptomatic of
the presence of irritating matter

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in the primae viae I gave him of calomel, grs. thirty, which passed off without producing any sensible difference either in the quantity or quality of the discharge.

Dreading the debility which must inevitably follow the continuance of so profuse a discharge, as well as from the entire inefficacy of the medicine which I had given him I called upon Dr Marshall a highly respected physician to whose talents and independence not only many of the citizens but also the physicians of the state are much indebted as his accuracy of observation as well as correctness of principle has enabled him to divest the science of many of its unnecessary trammels, and break the shackles, in which many of our physicians are bound, who consider the ratiocinative faculty, entirely confined to the authors, which they have

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race, and who without considering the continual change, either in the type, or violence of disease, or the of climate in which they have occurred, consider any deviation from the path, or sentiments which their tutors have impressed in to their minds, as an excommunicable heresy.

Here I have made a short digression from the subject the more immediate object of our enquiry, yet I trust that the attempt to confer upon (as I consider its correct author) the merit of having introduced a practice so at once safe and decisive will not be considered as altogether foreign to the subject.

An attempt to remunerate his kind and hospitable attention through the medium of words would be detracting from

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the sacred book of unfeigned gratitude which can only be wanting in that mind, which is insensible of favours.

His opinion I found from the first view of the case decidedly for rapid and drastic purging, and with that view, gave as I suppose not having any scales present, sixty grains of calomel, with directions, that the like quantity should be taken in four hours unless the first dose should change the aqueous appearance of the stools.

Blisters were applied to his extremities a few hours preceding the expected chill, the medicine having passed off without being accompanied with any perceptible change in the appearance or quantity of the discharges the advice of Dr Marshall and my own previous observation which had long since led me to consider the use of all palliatives internally given as inadmissible

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and injurious, determined me to continue the use of calomel in doses of half the quantity above mentioned alternately combined with colloquintida aloes gamboge and Rhubarb so that he now took thirty grs of calomel combined with large doses of one of the abovementioned articles every three hours at the same time that heat of his body which had now become universal, was moderated by the application of cold and even iced water to his temples and forehead by the means of clothes, at the same time that I permitted him to bathe his hands in cold water, the application of which as above related alone appeared to have the effect of rousing him from the state of lethargy, and coma, to which he was was continually disposed.

His tongue now on the fourth day was covered with a dark and dry crust which

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which so impaired his articulation that he was obliged to keep by him, a glass of cold water for the purpose of washing his mouth; a blister was now applied to the back of his neck. no other change except the increased debility. Purges continued.

On the fifth day at twelve o'clock with the exception of increased debility and twitching of the tendons which were now a concomitant of his sleep there could be but little change observed, as during the last three day he had taken two ounces of calomel combined with considerable quantities of other drastic purgatives as above mentioned I had now almost despaired of the practice when by the administration of another and a somewhat larger dose I was rejoiced to percieve the long expected and much wished for change in the alvine dis

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charges; which instead of being purely aqueous, now appeared to be mixed with a a dark coloured gelatinous matter, which floating through them gave them the appearance of rice, floating through water, and in the course of a few hours, I have the pleasure of evidencing the entire cessation of the watery discharges, which cessation, was followed by copious stools of a dark olive colour and very offensive, and of the consistence of jelly, this discharge was kept up for two days by the alternate administration of calomel and castor oil. the quantity of offensive ~~matter~~ matter passed during this time as I supposed was about two gallons when it gradually ceased his fever left him his pulse became soft and regular and by the moderate use of wine which he had taken

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for the last two days his appetite became so good as to ask for something to eat of which he had taken nothing for the last six days, he now refused to take the bark columbo or other bitters for which I however found a good substitute in wine a light and nourishing diet, with which, and the daily use of the Lick water, so as to operate as a gentle laxative, he was in a short time restored to his usual good health.

As this was a case the treatment of which I then considered as somewhat novel on account of the extent to which the purging plan had been carried having during the term of six days given three ounces of calomel combined with large quantities of other drastic purgatives and that with a success equalling my most sanguine expectations, I was induced to write its history, the most material

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parts of which I have given here both for the purpose of giving a more correct idea of the phenomena which marked the disease and as a more explicit illustration, of that treatment which when applied at an early stage of the disease, when the patients strength had not already been exhausted, has so far as my experience goes proved universally, successful.

Notwithstanding what I have already observed, that the preceding may be considered as history of the disease, in its more general and aggravated form, I must here observe that these symptoms were subject to many modifications and were often very diversified in their appearances; of these however I shall in this place only mention the most prominent.

Although the commencement of the disease was more generally marked by the circum

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stances already expressed yet I cannot say that these phenomena were by any means of universal occurrence, nor would it be an easy matter to point out the different forms and variations which its primary occurrence exhibited. As in this it obeyed the laws of epidemics in general and once exhibited in its incipient stage the in many cases all the symptoms of a large proportion of the diseases of common occurrence in our practice all of which however different in the incipient stage of the disease, appeared ultimately disposed to terminate in this form of fever or at least to exhibit phenomena wearing much of its aspect

This fact was particularly exemplified in a very interesting case of scrophula which terminated in this fever, and appeared to be entirely removed by its occurrence

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or at least upon the patients recovery from the latter disease, I have the pleasure of observing the absence of all the appearances of scrofula; Nor did any of its symptoms recur previous to my departure from the state although some months have elapsed anterior to that time, Nor have I any reason to apprehend a return of the disease as it appeared to be entirely eradicated.

The concomitance of the serous discharge from the bowels could not be considered as an universal occurrence but was so much so that I do not recollect of seeing (save in those cases where the purging plan had been resorted to in the incipient stage of the disease in which cases the disease was characterized by a peculiar mildness and capability of being managed) a solitary case where it

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Indeed it was the general occurrence of this circumstance which rendered the disease particularly notorious and discriminated it from the usual cases of sabbatical remittents, and conferred upon it the title of flux among the old women of the neighborhood and country around.

It is however necessary to observe here that my practice and observation was more particularly confined to a section of country approximating a river and large creeks to which situations I have reason to believe this circumstance was more particularly confined as from the general information of physicians whose practice was confined to sections of country more remote from such sources of exhalation the watery discharges were much less frequent,

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It would be useless that I should enter farther into a detail of the various forms which the disease exhibited. It will be sufficient to observe that I believe most other differences were only dependant on the peculiarities of constitution, the violence of the disease, and consequent more or less aggravated appearance of the symptoms, already enumerated.

With a few exceptions to the practice which I have laid down, in the case already related, I consider it one which in most cases we can depend upon with no inconsiderable degree of confidence. But as there may be doubtless, some usefull modifications adapted to this practice; and as it may be considered not altogether useless that we should here, (without pretending to enter critically into a series of strictures upon the practice pursued by many physicians)

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concisely point out, such circumstances as reason and experience will inform us should be avoided.

From the high standing and unimpaired reputation which emetics have sustained, in the treatment of almost every form of fever, not only from the authority of writers, but from the universal consent of practitioners, as well as the concurrent testimony of my own insulated experience, previous to the occurrence of this fever; it may be readily supposed that I did not feel any great hesitation in recurring to them under circumstances in which they from analogy appeared to promise something efficacious.

But this appeared to me as only one of those cases in which I was forced to view the fallacy of incomplete analogies, as I was forced to observe the al

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most universal, occurence of the colliqua
tive diarrhea, as a consequence to their
exhibition, a circumstance which with
much diffidence, I felt disposed to attri
bute to the emetics, previous to my con
firmation, in the opinion by the con
current evidence of that accurate
observer, the illustrious Dr. Sydenham,
who notices this circumstance as frequen
tly following the administration of emetics dur
ing the inflammatory stage of fever,
though tis true that he supposes in a
fever very analogous, to that which
I have here described, that this diarrhea
was ~~often~~ ~~as~~ a consequence of the too
sparing, administration of emetics. a
circumstance which I cannot consider
as less correct, as a very eminent phy
sician has informed me that he was
in the habit of treating this disease

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when accompanied with diarrhea, very successfully with emetics, though for the procuring their advantages he was forced to administer them in doses of a four fold size, an inattention to which circumstances their inutility in my hands may most probably be justly attributed. Judging however from an aggregate of my own experience and from the information which I have received from others, I can but consider emetics as much less efficacious and by far too precarious to supercede the use of the frequent administration of large doses of purgative medicines.

Yet at the same time that I do not consider the the preference of emetics to purgatives as warrantable, I do not feel that that fact is less valuable which at the same time will serve to remind us that

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the utility of bearing in mind the fact, that the lamp may be extinguished, not ~~by~~ more easily by detracting, than by the addition of the same oil, by which when properly applied the flame is supported, and prevent the condemnation, of that medicine which has not been the subject of a cautious investigation. Could I boast of the lancet, (emphatically termed by some the anchor of hope) I would with much caution indeed presume to differ with almost a world of authority, but relying upon my own observation, which to me appears entirely consonant with what reason, would naturally lead us to expect; I cannot but suppose save in those cases in which we have evident signs of local inflammation great pain or delirium, circumstances an attention to which will often serve (particularly with the young practitioner as better diagnostics

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to the use of the lancet than the precarious pulse itself; a knowledge of which can only be ascertained by long experience with frequent ~~frequent~~ and assiduous comparisons; that the prudent action of blood will often prove better calculated to debilitate than to prove of lasting benefit to the patient. Indeed it appears to me notwithstanding the high authority of Sydenham, as well as others for whose opinions I have ever entertained the greatest respect, that in a disease hastening our patient with a rapid march to a truly terrifying state of debility, at the same time under the debilitating influence of almost continual aqueous discharges by stool, that there can be but few circumstances which would warrant the recurrence to blood letting.

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To this opinion I am more particularly inclined when I consider that most of its advantages may be derived from cold effusion. which exemplifies its good consequences by reducing heat and arterial action relieving delirium and when the disease has further advanced, by preventing the continual tendency to coma by bestowing upon the patient, (in all cases in which I have tried it) a comfortable and highly agreable sensation, ~~and~~ in fact by apparently reanimating the patient,

As a remedy eminently efficacious in this disease I can not omit mentioning epispastics, As the great utility of these remedies in the advanced stages of all fevers, are so universally acknowledged and well known, it would be superfluous in me to enter into a detail of

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investigation of their beneficial operations in such states of fever: but shall here merely confine myself to some few circumstances in their application which if not entirely, have as I believe, been too much overlooked by practitioners.

As I have already observed, in the commencement of the disease now before us, we generally observe a diurnal remission and slight chill take place; I applied blisters to the extremities at that period previous to the accession of the succeeding cold stage as would permit the supervening of the consequent inflammation, previous to the recurrence of such cold stage.

The application of blisters previous to the reduction of arterial action by venaesection and the various other

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depleting measures, is a practice which I am fully aware is concurrence by most authors of the present day. But as it will be perceived that I have not hitherto been borne down by the weight of authority, I must confess (and that with the greatest deference and respect for many of the opinions of such authors with whom I would presume to differ) that in the present case I fear our science has been the victim of inaccurate observation and perhaps prejudice.

At least I am fully persuaded that by the application of blisters as above recommended, that like opium in the incipient stage of catarrh that it will arrest the expected chill so much that it will either not appear at all or be so much moderated that the violence

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of the succeeding hot stage will be very much moderated,

That they will by determining the flow of blood to the surface and extremities thus restoring the equilibrium to the circulation counteract any tendency to congestion in the stomach alimentary canal or other important viscera as well as by inviting the morbid phenomena to the surface, they perform the part of stool pigeons or decoy birds to the disease, they will as is most certainly ascertained, be followed by a more prompt and certain operation of purgatives and other medicines internally given.

That the advantages derived from the application of blisters as above recommended will at all times be as evident as when the system has been previously evacuated is a doctrine

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for which neither contend or believe to be correct.

Ex. But to me it appears as a very fallacious method of philosophising indeed that from this circumstance, we should make any deductions which would presume upon their entire inutility.

Ex. By the same process of reasoning we might infer, that because five does not equal ten that it equals nothing.

Ex. That kind of practice which is pursued by many physicians whose experience has taught them to acknowledge the utility of copious purging. yet who from preconceived notions in favour of diaphoretics certain neutral salts and the numerous class of febrifuge powders mixtures &c. continue to unite them with purgatives thus in the emphatic though as I believe fallacious

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language, of its enthusiastic advocate to, exposing every sail to the breeze at the same time that they apply oars) is one, which I cannot consider, otherwise, than as replete with error, often fraught in danger, and at best inefficacious, and would much rather choose to depend upon one sufficiently capacious, canvas, which reason and experience had taught me to consider efficacious than the numerous and smaller sails the management of which must baffle the skill of the navigator perplex and confuse his operations and only serve as the antagonists of each other. Considering the stomach and alimentary canal already labouring under the deleterious influence of large accumulations of acrid and irritating matter to the consequences of which they have already surrendered they so entirely

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lose their susceptibility to all other impressions, that we may be easily led to suppose that such lenient medicines as are at best possessed of very inconsiderable specific consequences can answer no other purpose than that of adding irritation to irritation ~~to irritation~~ and consequently aggravating the disease.

But let it not be supposed from what I have said in the last paragraph that I would condemn the use of diaphoretics under all circumstances of the disease; but that the knowledge of of their utility in some ~~ci~~ circumstances of the disease has, under the infatuated spirit of generalization, prevented that accuracy in discriminating the circumstances under which they are thus applicable. This too evident to be doubted, and it is only to this abuse of the pro

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practice that I would be considered as bearing evidence; for notwithstanding my most decided opinion of their entire inadmissibility at any period previous to the removal of morbid and and irritating matter from the stomach and intestines yet that in that stage of fever when the stamina of the disease may be said to have been eradicated, and the stomach has recovered its susceptibility to the impression of less active medicines that they may certainly be used with much benefit and prove valuable auxiliaries in the recovery, and like gleaners in the field gather up the scattered heads which have escaped the more effectual operations of the harvester.

By recurring to the case which I have detailed as well as from some observations which I have casualy introduced into the

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preceding pages it may be perceived that it is with no inconsiderable degree of confidence that I have mentioned purgatives as remedies of the utmost importance in the cure of this disease. In the support of this practice, I might adduce in addition to what has been already said, almost innumerable other facts, which have came not only under my own observation but also that of my quondam colleague in the practice Dr Mitchell as well as those which I have been able to collect from other sources, the relation of which would be swelling this essay to a size which is neither compatible with the time or inclination of the author, who would rather by making such general remarks as will serve to give a tolerable view of his opinions, and illustrate such general rules for their practical appli

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cation, as he considers the better calculated to insure their good consequences, in the cure of this disease.

Considering the disease if not dependant on at least attended with the presence of acid and irritating matter in the primae viae, the removal of such morbid accumulations will by every person be considered as the more evident and natural indication.

For the answering this indication the use of purgatives is not less evidently ascertained by reason than experience.

But for the accomplishing these purposes, it should be remembered, that they should not be exhibited with the sparing hand of timidity. Indeed there are but few cases in the practice of medicine in which the physician having taken his stand requires a more persevering firmness

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than in the administration of purgatives in many cases of bilious fever.

Hence we should lay it down as a general rule and practical precept, that having commenced, the use of purgatives, we should not intimidated by the by the great quantities of medicine which we have given) never abandon, but on the contrary increase, their use, until we have evidenced their specific impression, in the accomplishment of the consequences for which they were given; the occurrence of which, presents us with evidently one of the most certain diagnostics, with which we are acquainted, of the disease being of a manageable nature.

For indeed would it be from my intention to do, or say, aught which would tend have a tendency to encourage temerity in the practice of medicine, against such

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proceedings, we have in the health, and lives of our patients circumstances, of too much importance, to be meddled with without the most mature consideration, and scrupulous investigation, of which the case will admit: but at the same time we cannot view the prompt, and immediate application, of such measures as our knowledge, and the nature of the case will admit, as a sep imperious duty which we owe the unfortunate being who by presuming on our knowledge, and placing himself under our care, deposits in our hands, a trust than which, none in this world certainly; should be held more sacred, and inviolable.

Nor am I bound to the practice of exhibiting purgatives, in the undaunted manner above spoken of by any circumstance more particularly, than from

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the conviction that upon the promptness with which we exhibit them much of their safety is dependant,

The diversified consequences of purgatives in this fever, has as I believe received too little of the attention of physicians, contentiu with the occurrence of a few watery stools or a diarrhea after the exhibition of a cathartic which may either arise as a natural consequence of the disease, or from the compound irritation, of both medicine, and the irritating matter already existing in the alimentary canal as is peculiarly the case with the hydragogues of the milder kinds, as the neutral salts, and even of the more drastic, when exhibited in such small doses as are incapable of making any specific impression greater than that already in existence,

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I say contented with the occurrence of these circumstances, they have under the impression of their effectual and drastic operation ~~they have~~ omitted their use, thus converting those medicines which, when correctly exhibited are best calculated to work its destruction the most fatal instruments under the influence of the disease,

Our intention in prescribing the purging plan of treatment, in these cases, should not be by irritating the secretory vessels of the stomach and bowels, to produce an increased effusion into the alimentary canal, thus procuring those debilitating discharges of water, or what is termed by some keeping the bowels in a solu ble condition; but by evacuating them of the irritating accumulations, to remove the circumstances upon which the morbid phenomena are dependant.

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Indeed as a result of the experience, which I have had I cannot hesitate in declaring my most firm belief, and unreserved opinion, of the inutility and even deleterious consequences of this, and I may be warranted in saying every other, class of medicines, when too sparingly administered ~~in the opposing by~~ to accomplish the purposes for which they were intended, in the violent forms of this disease, which in the true spirit of despotism appears to be only irritated to the evincing its more tyrannical disposition by the opposition of any power which is incompetent to its entire destruction.

To support the truth of this remark we have abundant evidence in the practice of the French physicians, who observing the noxious consequences of their timidly cautious use of medicines, and ignorant of the

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consequences of the same medicines which freely exhibited, have influenced by the erroneous notion of nourishing the patient reduced the practice of trusting solely to the use of thin ptysans, for which many of the American physicians have substituted soups, practices which although better than the too sparing administration of purgatives, are never the less negatory and considering the state of the ~~the~~ alimentary canal which in these cases we have good reason, to suppose are incapable of carrying on the process of digestion, are by the additional irritation which they afforce, incomparably worse than the entire abstinence from food with the doing of nothing.

Having thus given a general history, of the disease with an account of the treatment which I consider peculiarly

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adapted to its cure; I shall now with a few remarks bring this essay to a

Conclusion.

It has not been my intention in the preceeding observations to enter into a detail, of any favorite prescriptions or medicines but by referring to the class es to which they have belonged with an account of the indications to be an swered given such a general idea, of the practice as will give, the physician who has a general knowledge of the properties of medicines an idea, of their practical application, through out the disease.

It will also be seen that I have om itted mentioning many circumstances of practical utility. my excuse for these omissions, is that I had no desire to trouble either myself or the reader with relations which are to be found in

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almost every work which has appeared upon the subject of fever.

That I have occasionally and almost unavoidably been led to indulge in some speculations, I admit, but at the same time from the consideration that the most ingenious of our hypotheses are the offspring of ignorance I have endeavoured to confine myself in those speculations to the explaining of establis hed practical facts, from which I only hope that they may not detract. as I have related them with that impor tant confidence which is the result of not a little observation, and a warrantable portion of clinical experience,

An Essay
on
Bilious Remittent Fever
of
Charleston Islands
&
Sanitary Study
of
Defence Island
1872
Dr. J. H.
Dean